

## WHAT IS A FOODPRINT?

A foodprint is a component of an individual's ecological footprint, including all of the resources required to support a healthy diet for one person over the course of one year. Foodprints are often discussed in conjunction with an individual's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and subsequent climate change.

## WHY ARE FOODPRINTS IMPORTANT?

Taking steps to reduce your foodprint has countless benefits. It can help feed others, reduce greenhouse emissions and free up land for other agricultural needs.

Food choices play a considerable role in defining your foodprint. Food choices represent one of the factors that help a region determine land use. Land tends to be devoted to the most valuable use possible, and for that reason, local and regional foodsheds tend to specialize in production of certain foods. For example, studies prove that it takes more land to raise beef cattle than any other meat-supplying animal. Incorporating vegetarian meals or other meat products like chicken and pork into your family's diet even one day a week can be an effective means of lowering an average household's foodprint. Another resource that contributes to a person's foodprint is the land required to support a healthy diet, which is influenced by a variety of factors, such as food choice, climate and soil nutrients.

## STEPS TO DECREASE YOUR FOODPRINT:

- **Conduct research.** Gather the information you need to understand where your food comes from and what it takes to get to your table. People all around the world invest time, land, water, energy and other resources to grow, store, process and transport food, much of which is wasted in the process. The more you know about where your food comes from, the more conscientious you will be in ensuring your food goes to good use or is composted back into the environment. Visit our [resource page](#) for more information.
- **Eat less meat.** The amount of land needed to feed the people who live in your area depends on available land and the type of diet that area's land needs to support. Substituting plant protein (legumes, nuts, etc.) for livestock sources generally reduces the land required to provide a community with food while still supplying that community with adequate nutrition.<sup>1</sup> To learn more about land usage and which food should be grown in your area, check out our [fact sheet on Limited Land](#).
- **Reduce waste.** Eat more leftovers. Very few people take leftovers home from restaurants. If you don't want to eat them immediately, freeze them. As for non-perishable and unspoiled perishable food, you can donate it to local food banks, soup kitchens, pantries and shelters. Visit our [resource page](#) for more information.

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<sup>1</sup> Peters, C. J., Bills, N. L., Wilkins, J. L., & Fick, G. W. (2009). Foodshed analysis and its relevance to sustainability. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, 24(1), 1–7.